



**MICHIGAN WORKS!  
TESTIMONY  
ON  
FY 08 DHS Appropriations Bill**

**BEFORE THE  
HOUSE  
FAMILIES AND CHILDRENS' SERVICES  
COMMITTEE**

**March 7, 2007**

Good Morning, Ms. Chair and members of the committee. I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the FY'08 Department of Human Services budget. I am Douglas Stites, Chief Executive Officer of Capital Area Michigan Works!, covering Ingham, Clinton and Eaton counties. I also serve as Chair of the Michigan Works! Directors' Council, representing the 25 Michigan Works! agency directors.

This morning I want to share with you comments from the Michigan Works! system on the FY'08 DHS budget; specifically our support for funding for the Jobs, Education and Training program.

The Michigan Works! system is Michigan's statewide workforce development system. Through the over 100 Michigan Works! service centers, we provide service to over 3 million customers per year. There are over 600 high-level private sector representatives that volunteer their time to set the local direction of the system. This is in concert with local elected officials who complete the public/private partnership. This structure, which has been operational since the mid-90's, connects Michigan Works! directly to employers and the local economy. We know the local labor markets and the needs of the local workforce. Michigan Works! provides guidance and brokering to align the publicly funded training with the demands of the marketplace.

Michigan Works! has a strong partnership with DLEG and the Department of Human Services on the Jobs, Education and Training program. As JET evolves and expands, this state/local partnership becomes stronger as we all see the benefit of success. Michigan Works! supports the additional funding being recommended for the expansion of the JET program statewide.

We have worked closely with DHS Director Udow and DLEG Director Swanson throughout program implementation and thank them for listening to the needs of the local system. Together we have defined operationally the program, within the parameters of state and federal requirements. By working together, we have a strategy in place that puts us on track toward meeting the federal work participation requirements.

But, the looming question is do we have sufficient resources to support the JET program design? While we all agree that providing an expanded array of services for a longer period is good policy, we must take a realistic look at how far our resources will go. We must live within our means. We have suggested to DHS and DLEG that the program design be adjusted to fit within the available funding. We need to take into account the population to be served and the federal requirements that need to be met. Both departments have agreed with this approach and discussion will continue. We are confident that a solution can be found. Michigan Works! is a willing partner to assist Michigan in this task.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on such an important economic matter.